

3-1961

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"Mary, Prototype and Personification of the Church"

Rev. Clement Dillenschneider, C.S.S.R.

No. 82 - March, 1961

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Father Clement Dillenschneider, one of Europe's most venerable and respected theologians, is the author of innumerable scholarly articles and books on the Blessed Virgin, which have brought his name to the attention of all Mariologists during the last thirty years. A list of his works is indicative of the scope of his Marian scholarship:

1) *Le Sens Chrétien et la Maternité Divine de Marie* (in the 4th and 5th centuries), Beyaert, Bruges, 1929.

2) *La Mariologie de Saint Alphonse de Liguori*, two volumes (Volume one is an account of the influence of the Saint on the development of Marian doctrine and piety after the difficulties with Protestantism and Jansenism. Volume two deals with the sources of the Saint's doctrine and attempts a synthesis of the thought of the great Marian doctor), Fribourg, Switzerland, 1931 and 1934.

3) *Marie au Service de Notre Rédemption* (The role of Mary as New Eve in the economy of redemption), Maison Saint-Gerard, Haguenau, 1947.

4) *Pour Une Corédemption Mariale Bien Comprise* (An attempt to elucidate the reality of Mary's participation in the redemption), Rome, Marianum, 1949.

5) *Le Mystère de la Corédemption Mariale* (A critique of several new theories by eminent Mariologists on Mary as coredemptrix), Paris, Vrin, 1951.

6) *Notre Dame de la Trinité*. Blois, 1949

7) *Le Sens de la Foi et Le Progrès Dogmatique du Mystère Marial* (A penetrating analysis of a perennially difficult problem), Rome, International Marian Academy, 1954.

8) *Le Principe Premier d'une Théologie Mariale Organique* (An attempt to elucidate the fundamental principle of Mariology), Paris, Alsatia, 1956.

9) *Marie dans l'Economie de la Création Renovée* (The fruit of many years of scholarly research and thought. — a summary, one might say, of the author's Mariological thought), Paris, Alsatia, 1957.

The present selection is taken from the last work with the permission of the author and publisher. It is a translation of Chapter VII (193-205), "Marie, Prototype de l'Eglise."

To fully understand this chapter of Father Dillenschneider's most important work, it is almost indispensable to be acquainted with the aim of the author expressed in his introduction: to show the place that belongs to Mary in the history of our salvation, to bring out in bold relief her salvific mission (so important to our faith and to our Marian piety), in short to demonstrate the role that the Virgin played in the preparation, the realization, and the completion of the "new creation," our redemption in Christ.

We are grateful to Mr. Jerome Wening, of Dayton, Ohio, for the translation.



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"Mary, Prototype and Personification of the Church"

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INTRODUCTION

It is not in Greek philosophy, but in the Bible, that we must look for the first explanation of typical personifications. Christian tradition has taken this into account.

The idea of a biblical type implies a reality in which is revealed to a certain degree the redeeming design of God; the complete revelation is reserved to a second reality which the first foreshadows.¹ This idea of the biblical type is found in the writings of the Fathers.

The basis of typology, the analogy, makes use of the type and the antitype. Therefore, when the analogy is expressed, there is a similarity amid the dissimilar. In typology of the common order, one progresses from an imperfect similitude realized in the original type to a more perfect resemblance realized in the antitype.

When we speak of Mary as a type of the Church, we understand that both Mary and the Church are signally co-ordinated to each other by the sanctifying will of God. The difference is that the relation of similarity of Mary to the Church is that of an eminent perfection to a lesser perfection. Mary is a type of the Church in this sense, that the type surpasses the perfection of the antitype. In Mary the mystery of grace eminently announces the mystery of the Church.²

It is not that Mary recapitulates the Church; only Christ does that. But she is a resumé of its perfection (*der Inbegriff*)³ or the perfect compendium of the Church.

That which is said about Mary will be verified in the Church; that which is explicitly in the Church is implicitly prepared and precontained in Mary; that which is developed and actualized in the Church through the course of time already lived, enveloped and virtually outlined in Mary.

It is with this first and basic acceptation of the typology of Mary and the Church that the Fathers and most authors of the Middle Ages concluded their studies.

Since that time, this stage has been passed. Precisely because Mary is the perfect figure of the Church, it is correctly thought that she has qualified to represent and to personify the Church, and to take the place of the Church in the decisive moments of our supernatural restoration.

1. Congar, *Marie et l'Eglise dans la pensée patristique*, Rev. Sc. phil. et théol 38 (1954), 15.

2. G. Philips, *Marie en de Kerk*, Ned. kath. Stemmen, 50, 1954, 241-251.
Du Meme, *La Mariologie de l'Année jubilaire*, Marianum, 18, 1956, 41-42.

3. H. Rahner, *Marie und die Kirche*, Innsbruck, 1951, p. 11.

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I. THE POSITIVE TRADITIONAL DATA

The idea of Mary as a figure of the Church is contained in chapter 12 of the *Apocalypse* which describes the "Woman" in combat with the dragon. The two interpretations offered by the exegetes are well known: the ecclesiological interpretation, according to which the Woman is the messianic community engendering Christ and His descendants; the mariological interpretation, of recent origin, which sees in the Woman Mary giving birth to a male child, the Messias, and therefore directly symbolizing the Church which ceaselessly engenders the "rest of posterity."

The two interpretations are far from being unalterably opposed to each other; they are joined. The unique Woman, contemplated solely by the prophet of Patmos, is Mary and the Church, inseparably joined to one another. And if we wish to conform to the Johannine symbolism, we must necessarily consider the Church in Mary and reciprocally, Mary in the Church. And in this case, even if we accord the priority to the ecclesiological interpretation, Mary could still be regarded as the figure of the Church because it is through her and in her that before the time of Christ, the messianic community engendered the Messias. In this way Mary prefigured also the Church of the New Testament whose role is to give birth to Christ in souls.⁴

It is exactly in this perspective, that a contemporary of St. Augustine sees in Mary the figure of the Church. The writer, as yet unidentified, was the first to point the way to the mariological interpretation of the *Apocalypse*. He pointed out "that the Woman signified the blessed Mary who brought forth our head integrally, while remaining a Virgin, and thus she is indeed a figure of the holy Church."⁵

The patristic testimony is explicit on the typology of Mary in relation to the Church. Eve-Mary, the parallel of the Fathers, has been sufficiently brought to light; the Virgin is described to us as the one who repaired the damage wrought by the first woman. Along with this parallel and even more emphasized, there is, as we have said, a second figure: Eve-the Church, which attests that the Church is a new Eve, a *Mater viventium*, who brings forth in baptism children of God.

One might think that it suffices to compare these two parallels to one another, in order to conclude to a sort of equation between Mary and the Church. However, Irenaeus' classic testimony of the parallel between Eve and Mary does not proceed in this fashion.

If he acknowledges this equation at least virtually, it is in consideration of his theory of recapitulation. Christ and we are one. That is why Mary, who engenders Christ, and the Church, which engenders us, are

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4. Braun, *La femme vêtue du soleil*, Rev. th. 55, 3, 1955, 639-670; B. J. Le Frois, S.V.D., *The Woman Clothed with the Sun*, *Apoc. 12, individual or collective?* Rome, 1954; L. Cerfaux, *La vision de la Femme et du Dragon de l'Apocalypse en relation avec le Protévangile*, Eph. Lov. 31, 1955, 7-3. Boismard, *L'Apocalypse*, 1950, 56.
 5. Ps-Augustin, *De symbolo ad catechomenos*, 3, 1, PL. 40, 611. The attribution of this work to Quodvultdeus is only probable. "Mulierem illam beatam Mariam significasse quae caput nostrum integra integrum peperit, quae etiam ipsa figuram in se sanctae Ecclesiae demonstravit."

likewise one. Mary is the Church and the Church is Mary, just as Christ is the Christian and the Christians, Christ.⁶ Hippolytus of Rome follows in the path of Irenaeus. "John, the precursor, recognized the Logos in the womb of Mary and at the same instant recognized the children who would be born in another maternal womb, that of the Church. Through his joyful tremor, he announced to them the new birth through the Spirit and the Virgin-Church."⁷

Although he is specifically dealing only with the Church, Clement of Alexandria, in a clear but discreet allusion, identifies the Church, the virginal mother, with Mary the Virgin Mother of Christ. "There is only one Virgin-Mother and I am pleased to call her the Church."⁸

It is in the middle of the fourth century, in the *Acta Archelai* that we come to the testimony of Hegemonius which attributes to Mary in all frankness the very name of the Church. "The most chaste virgin and the immaculate Church."⁹ The parallel identification shows that at that time the intimate connection of Mary's role with that of the Church had penetrated the Christian thought and language.

In the writings of Ephrem the Syrian, this identification is common. "Christ gave John the virgin disciple to Mary His Church."¹⁰

St. Epiphanius was the first to juxtapose the parallels Eve-Mary and Eve-Church. "The mystery of two in one flesh which Paul saw accomplished in Christ and the Church was first realized in Christ and Mary."¹¹

The identification of Mary and the Church is particularly noted in Cyril of Alexandria. His famous panegyric about the Virgin, delivered at Ephesus, constitutes as Mueller says, a sort of communication of idioms between Mary and the Church and it terminates with the significant statement: "We will always praise Mary, the Virgin forever and indeed the Holy Church."¹²

6. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 4, 33, PG. 7, 1080. Mueller, *Ecclesia-Maria*, Fribourg, Switzerland, 1951, 1 Edit., loc cit., 66-67. "And they who foretold the birth of the Savior from a Virgin, revealed the union of the Word of God to blood, because the Word would become flesh and the Son of God would be the son of man; He was pure, opening the completely pure womb of her who would regenerate men in God; He made her pure, and this having been done, Almighty God has an indescribable progeny." This text has tried the sagacity of critics. Is it Mary who is seen first or the Church? Ambrose, who is a disciple of Irenaeus, reproduces nearly the same text and manifestly applies it to the Church. "Christ is alone to open the mysterious, immaculate, and fruitful womb of the virginal and holy Church, in view of giving birth to the people of God." (In Luc. 2, 57, PL. 15, 1573.) But just as in Irenaeus the text manifestly has a christological Savior, so the idea of Mary as spiritual mother of men is not to be totally excluded from his thought. This is held by Mgr. Jouassard, *La théologie mariale de saint Irénée*, report presented to the 7th National Marian Congress, Lyon, 1954, note 15.

7. Hippolytus, *De Antich.* 44-45, G.C.S. Hipp. 1/2 28, 2-24; Mueller, *op. cit.*, 77.

8. Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagog.* 1,641, 3-42, 3, G.C.S. Clement of Alex. 1, 115, 5-22; Muller, *op. cit.*, 103-104.

9. *Acta Archelai*, 55, 3, G.C.S. Hegem. 81, 3-5; Muller, *op. cit.*, 128. "Virgo castissima et immaculata Ecclesia."

10. Ephrem, *Ev. conc. exp.* M. Moesinger, Venice, 1876, 134; Mueller, *op. cit.*, 148-149.

11. Epiphanius, *Panar.* 78,19,3-6, G.C.S. Epiph. 3, 469, 31, 470, 14; Mueller, *op. cit.* 143.

12. Cyril of Alexandria, *Homil. div.* 4, PG. 77,996; Mueller, *op. cit.*, 152-153.

We must now turn to Ambrose at greater length. He is the author of the formula, "Mary, a type of the Church."¹³

For Ambrose, the word 'type' has several acceptations. It sometimes signifies that which is temporary, imperfect and which fades away before the reality. It is found this way in the Old Testament. "In that people was a type; in us, the truth."¹⁴ Sometimes the word has the more usual sense of the image, similitude or figure;¹⁵ sometimes it has that of the representative symbol.¹⁶ Thus Mary, through her virginal maternity, is a symbol of the Church; "She is a type of the Church who is immaculate and married."¹⁷ However, there is an added meaning — the fact that what is realized once in Mary is ceaselessly realized in the Church.¹⁸ More important, Ambrose considers Mary in such an intimate relation with the Church, likewise a virgin and mother, that along these lines he makes no distinction between them. He includes both in a single vision. "How beautiful also are the prophecies about Mary under the figure of the Church, . . . if you consider the mysteries of generation."¹⁹ On Calvary, Ambrose saw the Church under the cross in the person of Mary. John represents believing humanity of which the Church is the Mother. And it is to the Church, under the figure of Mary, that the dying Christ addresses Himself: "And to you also from the cross Christ says: Behold thy Mother! and to the Church He says: Behold thy Son."²⁰

The parallel Mary-Church is one of the favorite themes of St. Augustine. And it is especially through him that the parallel became part of the theology of the Middle Ages. "The Church imitates the Mother of her Savior; she cannot be Mother and Virgin corporally, but spiritually she is Mother and Virgin."²¹ "If the Church engenders members of Christ, she perfectly resembles Mary: 'The Church is most like Mary.'"²² (1064 *Enchir.* 34, PL. 40, 249, *De s. virginit.* 2, PL. 40, 397.)

In his *Allegoriae*, Isidore of Seville summarizes the patristic tradition on this subject: "Mary symbolizes the Church which, espoused to Christ, conceives us all by the Holy Spirit as a virgin, and as a virgin engenders us."²³

With even greater brevity, Venerable Bede says: "The Church is the Mother of God."²⁴

13. Ambrose, *Exp. ev. Luc.* 2,7, C.S.E.L., 32, 45. "Maria typus Ecclesiae".

14. Ambrose, *In Ps.* 118, 5,6, C.S.E.L. 62, 85; Kellner, *Ambrosius als Erklärer des Alten Testaments*, 62.

15. Ambrose, *Exp. ev. Luc.* 4, 62, C.S.E.L. 32, 170; *Hexameron*, 4, 32, C.S.E.L. 32, 1, 138.

16. Ambrose, *De Joseph.* 3; 8, C.S.E.L. 32, 2, 76.

17. Ambrose *Exp. ev. Luc.* 2,7, C.S.E.L. 32, 45. "Typus est Ecclesiae quae est immaculata et nupta."

18. Huhn, *Das Geheimnis der Jungfrau Mutter Maria nach dem Kirchenvater Ambrosius*, Würzburg, 1954, loc cit., 151.

19. Ambrose, *De Institut. Virg.* 87, PL. 16, 326. "Quam pulchra etiam illa quae in figura Ecclesiae de Maria prophetata sunt, si . . . mysteria generationis intendas."

20. Ambrose, *Exp. ev. Luc.* 7,3, C.S.E.L. 32, 284. "Dicat et tibi de patibulo crucis Christus: ecce Mater tua! dicat et Ecclesiae: ecce Filius tuus."

21. Augustine, *Serm.* 191, 2, 3, PL. 38, 1010, *Serm.* 213, 7, PL. 38.

22. Augustine, *Serm.* 213, 7, PL. 38, 1064; Mueller, *op. cit.* 195 ss.

23. Isidore of Seville, *Allegoriae*, PL. 83, 117.

24. Bede, *In Luc.* 2,2, PL. 82, 330-331. "Dei Genitrix Ecclesia."

In the Middle Ages, as P. Barré has established rather completely, the traditional data was renewed, and it was from the very beginning in the terms employed by the patristic age. "Mary signifies the Church: the Church imitates Mary; the Church is most like Mary." Sometimes new formulas arose here and there. "Mary is the exemplar of the very young Church, the spouse of the Son of God."²⁵ "She is constituted the form of our Mother the Church."²⁶

These formulas do not express an absolute identification but rather a simple analogy between the qualities of Mary and the Church. Mary is seen as the principle center of reference and her pre-eminence of excellence over the Church is recognized.

Durand de Mende enumerates the titles which join Mary and the Church in this typology. "The Blessed Virgin is a figure of the Church, for just as Mary is a mother, virgin and spouse, so also the Church is the mother of saints. The Church has also the title of virgin and spouse: virgin of soul and of faith which surpasses virginity of the flesh; spouse, because she is the spouse of Christ."²⁷

II. INTERPRETATION OF THE TRADITIONAL DATA

In the patristic age as well as in the Middle Ages, the Virgin Mary and the Church are compared to each other principally through the mystery of their reciprocal virginal maternity.

To Father Congar belongs the merit of rendering theologians attentive to the double perspective in which this typology is established: first, in the more general means by which the Logos sanctifies the world and then the very particular way of the mystery of the integral Incarnation.²⁸

In a very extensive study, Father Hugo Rahner has remarked that, since the origin of patristic theology, the attempt was made to define the scriptural doctrine of sanctifying grace in the following manner:

The indwelling of Christ through grace in the heart of the faithful is a mysterious imitation and continuation of the eternal birth of the Logos from the Father and of the temporal birth from the Virgin.²⁹

In early and popular psychology, which is also found in the Bible, the heart is considered the birthplace of thought and of speech. On the other hand, it is known through revelation that Christ dwells in the heart of the faithful. In the mystery of the Trinity, the Logos proceeds from the heart of the Father through an eternal birth and He proceeds also from Mary through a temporal birth. The faithful are born again in

25. Rupert of Deutz, *De operibus Spiritus sancti*, 1, 8, PL. 167, 1577.

26. Ps. Ildephonsus, *Serm.* 8, PL. 96, 269. "Matris nostrae Ecclesiae forma constituitur."

27. Durand de Mende, *Rationale*, 6, 24, Edit. Venice, 1568, fol. 295; Barré, *Marie et l'Eglise*, Bulletin de la société française d'études mariales (1951), 63 ss.

"Beata Virgo figuram tenet Ecclesiae, sicut enim ipsa mater est, virgo et sponsa, sic et Ecclesia mater sanctorum, nomen tenet virginitatis et sponsae, virginitatis inquam mentis et fidei, quae praevallet virginitati carnis, et sponsae quia ipsa est sponsa Christi."

28. Congar, *art. cit.*, loc. cit., 35 ss.

29. H. Rahner, *Die Lehre der Kirchenväter von der Geburt Christi im Herzen der Gläubigen*, Zeitschr. f. kath. Theologie, 59, 1935, 333-418.

baptism through the Church, the virgin-mother, to a life conformed to Christ's life. Consequently, it is not surprising that the idea emerges, in theology, of a birth of the Logos in the heart of the faithful, in imitation of the eternal birth from the Father and of the temporal birth from His Mother. St. Hippolytus already had presented these views. The Perfect Man, Christ, he states briefly, was born in His human nature from the Virgin, and in His divine nature by a spiritual birth from the heart of the Father. The birth of the faithful in the Church is an imitation of the birth of the Logos; it is accomplished from the virgin and the Spirit. Whence arises the Mary-Church typology.³⁰

It is clear, therefore, that the idea of a continuity between Mary and the Church was part of the general economy of the mystery of the coming of the Logos, or, of His birth in humanity. The Fathers, Origen especially, considered the Christian mystery as a mystical union in the Logos which is realized in the human race through the many comings of this same Logos in the Scriptures, the Prophets, in Mary, in the Eucharist, and in the faithful soul.³¹ Ambrose describes in very graphic language the multiple sanctifying entries of the Word of God: "He descended upon Adam, He rose in the synagogue. He came on the nations, He pressed upon the Jews. Let us look at these manifestations. He came from heaven to the Virgin, from the womb to the manger, from the manger to the Jordan, from the Jordan to the cross, from the cross to the tomb, from the sepulchre to heaven." And he concluded, "Therefore even now He rushes from the heart of the Father to His holy ones. . . . He frequently comes to everyone's heart."³² These views of the patristic age extend into the Middle Ages. In the twelfth century, Nicolas of Clairvaux writes: "Behold the great mystery. The Son of God is brought forth whole and entire from the heart of the Father into the womb of Mary, and from the womb of Mary into the bosom of the Church."³³

It goes without saying that of all these comings of the Logos, none is more important than His coming to Mary at the moment of the Annunciation. "But the Annunciation itself is, in a sense, nothing more than

30. Hippolytus, *De Antich.* 26, Edit. Achelis, 18, 21, 19; *Cont. Noet.* 16, PG. 10, 825, *ibid.* n. 10, 809, *ibid.* n. 17, PG. 10, 828.

31. Congar, *art. cit.*, loc. cit., 35.

32. Ambrose, *In Ps.* 118, Sermon. 6, 6, PL. 15, 1269-1270. "Salit super Adam, transilit super synagoga. Salit super gentes, transilit super Judaeos. Videamus salientem. Salit de caelo in Virginem, de utero in praesepe, de praesepe in Jordanem, de Jordane in crucem, de cruce in tumulum, in caelum de sepulchro." "Ergo et nunc salit et nunc currit de corde Patris super sanctos suos . . . salit ergo in uniuscujusque corde frequenter."

33. Nicolas of Clairvaux, *De s. Victore*, PL. 144, 733. These considerations are found also in the writings of Pierre Comestor, on which Nicolas undoubtedly depends: Ps-Hildebert, 14, PL. 171, 412. Barré, *art. cit.*, loc. cit., 91. Found also in the following: Helinand de Froidmont, *In Epiph. Doct.* 2, PL. 212, 525; Isaac de Stella, *In Ascens.* PL. 194, 1832; Innocent III, *In Nativ. Domini.* 3, PL. 217, 459; Eckbert de Schönau, *Serm. panegyric.* 4, PL. 184, 1012; Adam Scot, *Serm.* 16, PL. 198, 187-188; Henri de Marcy, *De peregrinatione civitate Dei*, 12, PL. 204, 349; Martin de Léon, *In Assumpt.*, PL. 209, 22. Cf. Barré, *art. cit.*, loc. cit., 91-92.

the decisive moment of the general economy which envelopes and dominates it."³⁴

It is in this first perspective that we must read the patristic texts which affirm that what was realized once in Mary at the Incarnation, continues to be realized for the rest of time in the Church. And in this perspective there is no bond of efficient causality between Mary and the Church, but rather a simple bond of exemplary causality, with the addition of a kind of finality in this sense, that the divine will is realized in the one in view of the other, i.e., in Mary in view of the Church.³⁵

According to Origen, the coming of the Logos in the womb of Mary and His birth are ceaselessly repeated in the Church.³⁶

As Mary received the Logos through the *verbum fidei*, so the Church and the faithful soul receives Him mystically.³⁷

Methodius of Olympus asserts that one has a very distorted piety, if he admits only the parousia of the Word in the flesh which He took from the Virgin, without likewise admitting the parousia of the same Word in the spirit of each of us.³⁸ "Always, and in every man," writes Maximus the Confessor, "the Logos of God wills to accomplish the mystery of His Incarnation."³⁹

According to Ambrose, the faithful soul who engenders Christ, receives the name of Mary. "For it is the soul which spiritually gives birth to Christ."⁴⁰

This assimilation of Mary and the Church operates in the order of faith and in the sacramental order.

It is known with what insistence Augustine exalts the faith of Mary in the mystery of the conception of the Word. "Faith in the mind, Christ in the womb."⁴¹ "The virgin conceived Christ spiritually by believing."⁴² The conduct of Mary should be ours. "The Mother carried Him in her womb; we carry Him in our heart."⁴³

34. Congar, *art. cit.*, loc. cit., 35.

35. Congar, *art. cit.*, loc. cit., 36.

36. "Understand ye pastors of the churches ... that His angel is always descending from heaven and announces to you that today is born the Savior Who is Christ the Lord." Origen, *Comment. in Luc.* 12, Edit. Rauer, 84,5 ss. Cf. also *Homil. in Cantic.* 2,4, Rahner, *art. cit.*, loc. cit., 352. In *Cantic.* 2,6, Edit. Baehrens, 51. "The Nativity of Christ marks a beginning (the luminous shadow which enveloped the Virgin): His Nativity begins not only in the shadow of Mary; but also in you, if you are worthy, the word of God is born."

37. H. Rahner, *art. cit.*, loc. cit., 355, note 28.

38. Methode d'Olympe, *De Sanguisuga*, 8, 2, 3, Rahner, *art. cit.*, loc. cit., 359.

39. Maximus the Confessor, *Ambiguorum liber*, PG. 91, 1081, *Quaest. ad Thalass.* 40, PG. 90, 400. Gregory of Nyssa, *De Virginit.* 2, PG. 46, 324.

40. Ambrose, *De Virginit.* 4, 20, PL. 16, 271. "Est enim anima quae spiritualiter parit Christum."

41. Augustine, *Serm.* 166, 1, In *Nativit. Domini.*, PL. 38, 1010. "The maternal relationship would have been of no avail for Mary unless she had borne Christ more joyfully in her heart than in her flesh." Augustine, *De Virginit.* 3, C.S.E.L. 41, 237. "Fides in mente, Christus in ventre."

42. Augustine, *Enar. in Ps.* 67, 21, PL. 36, 826. "Illa Virgo Christum ... spiritualiter credendo concepit."

43. Augustine, *Serm.* 180, 3, G. Morin, *Augustini sermones post Maurinos reperti*, Miscell. Agost. I, Romae, 1930, 211. "Portavit eum Mater in utero; portemus et nos in corde."

All the pseudo-augustinian sermons which are extant embellish these themes.⁴⁴

In the sacramental order, there are numerous texts which compare the mystery of the virginal maternity of Mary to christian Baptism in the Church. "The principle of fecundity which was found in the womb of the Virgin," writes Leo the Great, "is communicated by Christ to the baptismal fonts: He has given to the water what He gave to His Mother. '*Dedit aquae quod dedit Matri.*' The power of the Most High and the operation of the Holy Spirit which enabled Mary to give birth to the Savior, now enable the water to give new birth to those who believe."⁴⁵

It was natural that this typological assimilation should be cited in the liturgy of the Vigil of Easter and in christian Baptism. Thus we read in a prayer of the Mozarabic Rite: "Sons of light have arisen whom our mother the Church has engendered this morning through the spiritual grace of this night: conceiving without corruption, and bearing with joy, she is truly a mother fruitful without any conception from human seed."⁴⁶

It is undoubtedly of set purpose that in Rome, it was customary joyfully to lead the newly baptized to the basilica of St. Mary Major and to consecrate certain baptisteries in a special way to the Virgin.

The second perspective, in which we must understand a certain number of texts concerning the typology of Mary and the Church, is that of the Incarnation, understood in the integral sense as a recapitulation of men in the Word made flesh. This new perspective favors, as has been well noted by P. Congar, "a direct continuity between the maternity of Mary and that of the Church. The first perspective is fundamental and is bound to the second. Between the two there is not only an exemplary bond (or a bond of finality) but also a bond of efficient causality."⁴⁷

44. It suffices for us to cite one of the most beautiful texts of a post-augustinian sermon on Christmas: "Time springs forth from this day. Believe in Christ and He will grow in your life. Have you believed? The day has begun. Are you baptized? Christ was born in your heart, but will He remain the same as on that first day? He will grow, arriving at manhood, and not failing in old age. May your faith grow and know no decline. Thus you will belong to Christ the Son of God, in the beginning the Word in God, the Word God made flesh that He might dwell with us. He was born for us; we must be reborn in Him." *Serm.* 370, 4, PL. 38, 1959. Rahner, *art. cit.*, loc. cit., 393.

45. Leo the Great, *Serm.* 25, PL 54, 211. Trad. Sources chret., Sermon, 121 ss. The testimony of Honorius of Autun is very similar: "The glorious Virgin Mary is a type of the Church, Virgin and Mother. She is even foreshadowed, since by the fecundity of the Holy Spirit, sons of God would be generated through her in baptism." Honorius of Autun, *Sigillum B.M.* PL. 172, 499.

46. *Mozarabic. Sacr.*, Edit. Férotin, Paris, 1912, 250. A more sober preface is sketched in the Gregorian *Sacr.* of Holy Saturday: "Sons of light have arisen whom our holy mother the Church has conceived without corruption after the example of our Lord's Mother. Muratori, *Liturgia Romana Vetus*, Venetiis, 1748, II, 313. "Filii lucis oriuntur quos matutino partu per gratiam spiritalem hac nocte progenerat mater Ecclesia, sine corruptione concipiens et cum gaudio pariens, exprimens in se utique formam virginis genitricis absque ullo humanae contagionis fecunda conceptu."

47. Congar, *art. cit.*, loc. cit., 37. "In the identity of the mystery of Mary and the Church, the designs of the grace of God are not to be discerned in two separated moments; the first is decisive and encloses the second." *ibid.*

Although the Fathers did little to develop this aspect of typology, nevertheless it was not totally absent from their horizon. Leo the Great on a memorable page celebrates, in the mystery of the Nativity of Christ our Head by the Virgin Mary, the origin of the new people of God in the Church. "The feast today renews for us the sacred coming of Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary. We find that in observing the nativity of our Savior, we also celebrate our own birth. The birth of Christ is indeed the beginning of Christian people and the birthday of the Head is also the birthday of the body. If each is called in turn, if all the sons of the Church are divided according to the succession of time, the ensemble of the faithful — emerging from the baptismal font, crucified with Christ in His passion, rising with Him in His resurrection, and sitting at the right hand of the Father after the ascension — are today born with Him. Every believer, no matter from what part of the world he originates if he is regenerated in Christ, must break with the sin which he had from birth and must become a new man — *transit in novum hominem* — through a second birth. Henceforth, he is no longer reckoned in the descendance of his father according to the flesh; he belongs to the race of the Savior, *in germine salvatoris*."⁴⁸

In the Middle Ages the maternity of Mary and that of the Church was stressed in the unity of the Mystical Body, and most especially, in reference to chapter 12 of the *Apocalypse*. "There is one male child whom the Virgin Mary bore daily and whom the Church bears daily, because Christ with all His members is one Christ."⁴⁹

The most typical terminology in this case is that of Isaac de Stella who points out that the two maternities complete each other to the point that there is only one maternity — fulfilled in the total Christ. "The unique, total, and only Christ is the Head of the body. And this unique Person is the only Son of one God in heaven and of one Mother on earth; and there are many sons, but only one Son. And just as the Head and the body are composed of only one Son and many sons, so also Mary and the Church are only one Mother and several mothers; . . . both are mothers of Christ, but neither gives birth without the other. Each is mother of Christ, but neither brings forth the whole Christ without the other."⁵⁰

Since Christians are a continuation of Christ, Mary, the Mother of Christ, prolongs, as it were, her own maternity in the Church.

48. Leon le Grand, *Serm 6, de Nativite*. 2, Sources chret. I, 127.

49. Bérengaud, *In Apoc.* PL. 17, 877. Alcuin, *Comment, in Apoc.*, PL. 100, 1153; Haymo d'Alberstadt, *In Apoc.* 3, 12, PL. 117, 1081; Rupert of Deutz, *In Apoc.* 7, 12, PL. 169, 1043. "Unus masculus est quem Virgo Maria peperit quotidie et Ecclesia quotidie parit, quia Christus cum omnibus membris ejus unus Christus est."

50. Isaac de Stella, *Serm.* 51, *In Assumpt.*, PL. 194, 1863. "Utraque Christi mater, sed neutra sine altera totum parit."

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